

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the specification, the paragraph after the title "Cross Reference to Related Applications" has been amended to include the patent number of parent application.

Claims 16-19 and 21-25 are pending in this application as amended. Claim 20 has been cancelled. Support for new claim 21, for example, can be found in original claim 4. Support for new claim 22 can be found, for example, at column 6, line 29. Support for new claim 23, for example, can be found at column 6, lines 30-31. Support for new claim 24, for example, can be found at column 6, lines 30-32. Support for new claim 25, for example, can be found at column 6, lines 32-36.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure stating that the patent number of the parent application should be inserted in the continuation information section. Applicants have amended the "Cross Reference to Related Application" to include the patent number for patent application serial number 09/190,038.

The Examiner objected to claim 20 under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 16. Applicants have cancelled claim 20.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,314,325 to Bosler in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,389,179 to Westcott et al., or alternatively Westcott et al. in view of Bosler. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Independent claim 16 has been amended to recite an apparatus having a selective cooling means capable of reducing a temperature of said patterned sheet portion below a heat deflection temperature of said polymeric material while leaving said remaining portion of said extruded sheet above said heat deflection temperature.

Bosler discloses an apparatus for continuous vacuum forming of an extruded hot plasticized material, such as vinyl, upon a moving flat flexible forming surface, which includes a first and second roller that are continuously rotatably movable. A cooling station may be included which consists of a water spraying means and a water collecting means to facilitate cooling of the finally formed product. Bosler does not teach or suggest a selective cooling means, a shaping means for forming a remaining sheet portion, or further cooling means for cooling a remaining sheet portion. Nor does Bosler teach cooling one portion of the sheet while

leaving a remaining portion of the sheet above a heat deflection temperature. Rather Bosler teaches only one forming operation and teaches a water spray means which cools the entire formed sheet at one time.

Wescott et al. teach a machine for making a product from a coiled sheet of thermoplastic polymer. Portions of the polymeric sheet are selectively and sequentially heated and progressively bent to a desired shape by passing the sheet through a series of heating, forming and cooling stations. As admitted by the Examiner, Wescott et al. do not disclose an extruder, a rotating belt means comprising a drive roller, an idle roller and a flexible belt, or a vacuum means for applying vacuum pressure to said extruded sheet through at least said apertures in said mold belt, so as to draw said extruded sheet into intimate forming contact with said mold impression to form a patterned portion and a remaining portion of said extruded sheet while said polymeric material is still hot. Further, Westcott et al. teach away from the combination of these references at column 3, lines 18 – 29 where it is stated:

In the prior art, siding products were produced by melt extrusion of the polymer to the desired configuration. This practice results in the need to provide complicated and precision-machined forming dies adapted to form and support the sheet across its entire width and complicated transport means for moving the sheet through the operation. Another consequence of this prior art practice is increased energy costs both from the heating standpoint and also from the need to provide cooling means for the sheet across its entire width after forming is effected.

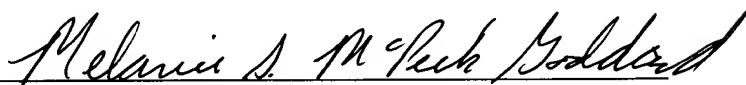
This process described and criticized by Westcott et al. is the process employed by Bosler. Thus, Westcott et al. specifically teaches away from the combination of references. Further, Westcott et al. also, therefore, teach away from claim 16, as it includes the limitations of the extruder, belt and roller mechanisms and vacuum forming of the sheet. Thus, not only is there no suggestion in either reference to combine the teachings to arrive at Applicants' invention, but also there is a specific teaching away from the combination and the invention of claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 should be allowable over these references. As claims 17-19 and 21-25 depend from claim 16, they should be allowable for the same reason.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Assistant Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to deposit account **04-1679**.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Extension of time (1 month)

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